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Introduction from the Editor and VATE President-Elect

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Introduction from the Editor and VATE President-Elect

Acknowledgements

I wish to send a warm thank you to Kendra Ristola, Anil Kajani, and Roberta Lowe for helping with this Virginia English Journal transition to the Digital Commons, powered by bepress. Couldn't have done it without you!



Introduction from the Editor and VATE President-Elect

Welcome to our new face of the *Virginia English Journal*! This move to the Digital Commons, powered by bepress, will save our state organization close to \$1K a year, and it affords us some useful tools (e.g. readership analytics and built-in reviewer processes). This transition took a little time, but with each edition, we hope to make the *VEJ* a little better in this new space. I want to thank Kendra Ristola, an undergraduate English Education teacher candidate at Bridgewater College, for helping me with this transition. She worked hard to make this possible!

The focus of this issue is on how we can support our students in being successful. As we prepare for an academic year like no other, there is one thing that is certain: we are teachers who care deeply about our students and their learning. As instructors, we need each other more

than ever, and whether we meet our students face-to-face or online, our students need our presence. In this issue, Dr. Don Gallo shares with us how he supports his former and current students with “The Sublime Utility of Poetry.” Within this Summer 2020 edition, I hope you find nuggets to strengthen your teaching as we work together to support students.

In this spirit, we also invite you to “Hit the *refresh* Button!” with VATE’s 2020 Virtual Mini-Conference coming October 24th. The 2019-20 school year is one that will go down in the books — not just for the massive school closures, but also for the amazing ways teachers quickly adapted to their students’ needs. The 2020-21 year is going to require further adaptability and continued efforts to ensure EQUITY. This word brings to mind endless questions, some of which we’ll address at our first virtual mini-conference.

- How do we ensure an equitable education for all of our students during distance learning? How do we do this when school buildings are open and in session?
- How do we implement anti-racist literary practices in a state struggling with its racist past?
- How do we acknowledge and change our own explicit and implicit bias so that we include everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexuality or abilities?

When we come together with fellow English teachers to hit the refresh button, we’ll be looking at how to acknowledge and learn from the past and move forward. We hope you’ll join us on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. for an interactive workshop with Lorena Germán as well as sessions on equity from English educators from around the state. The event is FREE for all VATE members. If you’re not currently a member, please join us! Visit vate.org to become a member, update your membership, and register for this exciting event.

Lorena Germán is a Dominican American educator working with middle and high school students in Austin, Texas. Her Master’s degree is from Middlebury College’s Bread Loaf School of English. She has been published by NCTE, ASCD, Heinemann, National Writing Project, EdWeek, and featured in *The New York Times*, *Embracing Equity*, and others. Most recently, she co-edited the anthology, *Speaking for Ourselves* and self-published *The Anti Racist Teacher: Reading Instruction Workbook*. She’s proudly a two-time nationally awarded teacher. Lorena is Co-Founder of the Multicultural Classroom, as well as Co-Founder of #DisruptTexts, and also Chair of NCTE’s [Committee Against Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English](#).



Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny M. Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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&

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